

**Ken Stein interview with Ambassador Roy Atherton, Washington, DC
(16 July 1992)**

Alfred Roy Atherton, Jr., participated in U.S-Soviet Middle East negotiations and formulation of Rogers Plan, 1969; Kissinger-Ismael secret meeting in Paris, 1973; mission to Moscow in October 1973 to negotiate UNSC 338; Kissinger Middle East shuttle diplomacy team, 1973-1975; Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, 1974-1978; Ambassador at Large for Arab-Israeli negotiations, Leeds Castle and Camp David participant; Egyptian-Israeli Treaty negotiations, 1978-1979; and US Ambassador to Egypt, 1979-1983.

Contents: Atherton's early years in the State Department, adviser to Joe Sisco, Kissinger's early fascination with Anwar Sadat prior to the October 1973 War, mention of the Kissinger-Ismael talks in early 1973, outbreak of the 1973 War, going to Moscow with Kissinger and the drafting of Resolution 338; Golda is angry with Kissinger when they meet toward the end of the 1973 War; Atherton suggests the phrase in 338, 'negotiations between the parties,' Kissinger nods to Dayan 'you have another 48 hours;' Kissinger and Sadat meeting, November 6, 1973; Kilometer 101 Talks ending the October War and Kissinger ends them pre-emptively so he has something to come out of the December Geneva Conference; Kissinger goes to Damascus in December 1977 'totally blind;' Egyptian Third Army surrounded; Geneva Conference and the UN role; 31 day shuttle diplomacy; MENA House December 1973 (continued in second interview), 37 pages.

RA: There might be certain things that I really draw a blank on.

KWS: From 1973 until your retirement, give me just a general, quick review of the positions that you held and the time frames.

RA: '73 meaning when the crisis broke out? The war?

KWS: Yeah. Where were you when the war broke out and take me down to when you retired.

RA: I was deputy assistant secretary in NEA, to Joe Sisco, who was then still assistant secretary. And I was there because Joe had pulled me up out of directorship of the office for Israel and Arab-Israeli affairs, to be, in effect, his right hand on the Arab-Israeli things. I was the deputy to the bureau but I didn't handle anything in those days except Arab-Israeli things. The South Asian and North African and all those other things were in other peoples...And I was in Washington, in fact, I guess I was in charge of the bureau when the war broke out. Joe was in New York with Henry. And I was, if you've read Henry's account you know that I was the one that had to go and sit with the mighty and the great at the, in the situation room that morning, the day the war started, to get some coherent assessment to send to Henry in New York about how this started, who started it, and how did this happen. So that's where I was then. And I was, because of that, I was sort of there when, I became part of whatever travelling team was put together. Starting

with the, well, during the war, I was the operations center, sort of, coordinator. We had a task force as you always set up in the office. In the '67 war, I was head of the task force. This time I had rotating every senior country director level people who were on a roster so that there was always one of them up there 24 hours a day. And my job was to manage, sort of, the crisis management side of things. It was making sure that situation reports were prepared on time and that they got to the right people and they got the right inputs and that the evacuation issues were being handled. Not sitting in at high policy council decisions except ad hoc, in other words, the task forces do not, it's not a policy level organization. They provide the raw material that goes to the...

KWS: Who were the 2 or 3 best people that were working at the...

RA: Well, I'd have to go back and look at who all the people were who were in the bureau at the time.

KWS: David Korn?

RA: But there were certainly people. I mean my recollection is that it was people like Mike Sterner and again the usual suspects. I would honestly have to go back and look at the staffing pattern.

KWS: Because I think Talcott was there.

RA: Tal Seeley was certainly there.

KWS: David was there. Michael was there.

RA: Mike Sterner.

KWS: I had a wonderful interview with Michael.

RA: I mean, it was just, you know, it was a good team. All the people that knew what they were doing. And in some ways, I couldn't help but compare it to being in that same, more or less, situation but not a senior, at the time of the '67 war. When there was a real firewall almost between the task force and what it was doing and the policy group which was headed by Gene Rostow at that time. The link was in '67. He was the assistant secretary. But many of us who felt we might have some input to make it at the policy level were really frustrated in '67. It was to finding how to feed it in. And that was not true in '73, even though we were not part of the very senior confab that went on with Henry and the White House and Joe, who was in New York then. Obviously we were dealing a lot with the UN side of it.

KWS: lets find the detail

RA: That I can look up, I've got a reference for it.

KWS: But the point was that you did become...

RA: But I could get into--I mean if I saw something that I thought was important, there were ways for me to make sure it got to Henry. Either doing a memo to Joe or even saying, "Could I at least go talk to Henry about this," with Larry Eagleburger who was of course with Henry at the time and Larry was always somebody I could get to if I thought it was important to get it in.

KWS: But you did end up going to Moscow with Joe?

RA: I ended up going to Moscow. But during the period until the trip to Moscow, I didn't always know what decisions were being made until they were made. Henry carried this around very much in his pocket. The whole business—the question of how to respond to Israel's request for resupply of military equipment. How do we demand a ceasefire in place or a ceasefire that will require withdrawal to the lines? Those sorts of things. We all had views on those and had a chance to make our views known. But when the decisions came, they were not decisions that we were consulted about. This is what I'm going to do, but I want to get one final set of reactions. I don't ever recall having that. Now maybe Joe did. Joe may have because he was much closer to Henry.

KWS: If you were at the Arab-Israel desk, what kind of efforts had been made prior to the war to take Sadat seriously? And I don't mean going back to '71, I don't mean going back the stand still ceasefire. I mean '72 and '73. We know of the Hafez Ismail talks with Kissinger.

RA: Yep. I was in on the ones in Paris. Hal Saunders and I were both in on those.

KWS: How serious did Henry take Hafez Ismail and how serious did he take his communication with Henry through the back channel? Why did it have to come to a war, Roy?

RA: Well, Henry was becoming fascinated I think with this issue and certainly with the sort of chance to engage in this kind of one-on-one secret diplomacy with Sadat's counterpart. I don't think that Henry, I'm not sure at what point he suddenly realized that this was not something he could manage and keep under control. He was not totally focused on the Middle East. He was focused on his Vietnam issues and he had always felt that the Middle East was something that was a loser and it's better to not get too deeply engaged. I mean, all the time he was in the White House he left it pretty much to the State Department, though he wanted to be told what was going and he had his views, and occasionally he did weigh in and say this is enough, we're gonna... I mean, Joe was awfully good in those days of keeping the channel to Henry open when Henry was still in the White House. And he had a very good, special, close relationship with Henry. But I don't think that the fact that we were getting signals not just from Sadat, we were getting signals from the Saudis at that time about "if you don't do something to break this impasse and take seriously the need to get the Israelis off of Arab territory, we mean it. And we

will have to prove to you that we mean it, even if necessary even by great reluctance using our oil power." I mean, those signals were coming from the Saudis in a very subtle sort of...

KWS: '71, '72?

RA: '72. At least certainly in '72 and some of us, I was one of them, did take that seriously. And I can remember arguing with some Israelis including, I think, including, it was Moshe Rabid, who was then political council, I think, at the embassy here about why we had to take seriously this potential threat to the energy sources, ourselves and our allies. But I never felt that this was really, totally accepted by Kissinger. I mean Kissinger had still, I think, this feeling that, and again I'm trying to read his mind, I don't know, he never said this to me and people that are closer, like Larry or Joe, might be able to confirm or not confirm it, but he still was a little suspicious of the department of Middle East specialists. We were not totally part of his inner circle at that stage.

KWS: He hadn't developed confidence in Sadat yet, had he?

RA: I don't think he did. I think he began to take Sadat seriously only after the war started. And then, even during the meetings with Hafez Ismail, I mean, his feeling was that Sadat...

KWS: This was Paris in 1972

RA: This was Paris in early '72, something like that, maybe May, June, sometime in the spring of '72. And I was, you know how that came about, how my being there came about?

KWS: No. No I don't.

RA: Well, it was an interesting story because Henry, this was when he was still National Security Advisor, and Henry had had a meeting with Hafez when Hafez Ismail came to Washington the previous year. I mean, Sadat, quite ostentatiously said "I am going to have a National Security Advisor so I have somebody that can deal with..." he had by that time decided that the focus of power was in the White House and not at the State Department. But he had figured that out. And he sent Hafez Ismail. Now, the overt part of that '71 visit, whatever month it was, was to meet with, he did meet at the Department, he met with Rogers. But then he had, his real meeting was, I don't know whether it was totally off the record, totally secret and kept out of the press. I think it was. There was no public knowledge of the fact that Hafez Ismail met with Henry at the White House. And out of that came the agreement that they would stay in touch. Henry was certain, you know, he wasn't about to rebuff this. He was still not sure what Sadat's strategy was or what kind of person Sadat was. But then, none of us really were. You know Sadat seemed terribly erratic in those days. He came up announced the era of decision and then...

KWS: Was his expulsion of the Soviets a message to us?

RA: It should have been! But again, there was no, you know, the mind set was the mind set.

KWS: You shake your head like Saunders and Quandt and Sisco. The only thing that's going through your head which you haven't yet said is "Why didn't he extract something from us before?"

RA: I know, exactly. No, that's true. And also, why didn't we begin to understand that this man, despite his theatrics and blusters of his seeming erratic ways, that there was a kind of consistency running through this? But I think we were diverted by all the things that seemed irrational or were non-sequiturs or jumping from one line to another. You know, Kissinger's conclusion was that Sadat simply had a totally unrealistic appraisal of what was achievable, what the Israelis could be persuaded to do and to give, going all the way back to the '71 negotiations on the interim Suez Canal agreement. Where his idea was that Israel had to pull back the Al-Arish Ras Mohammed, you know. And at that time Kissinger was, that was a State Department operation, but it was so totally far from anything that was remotely doable in Israeli minds, or from the Israeli point of view. And the same thing was true with these meetings with Hafez Ismail. I mean, Hafez Ismail's brief was again, you know, I need the commitment to withdraw and in return, we'll end belligerency. And Kissinger, I can recall going through his brief in a very masterful way, in his own sort of way. And this long relaxed day of meetings with Hafez Ismail in Paris. How that came about. There had been back channel messages, many of which I didn't know about at the time or only had heard about, it helped having Hal Saunders in the White House in those days. And Hal and I did keep a channel open when there wasn't a very good one between the Secretary of State and Kissinger. And Joe was the main link, of course, but Hal and I would compare notes. But Hal was under constraints and I knew there were things he couldn't tell me. But it was better than having no channel. So I was aware that there was something going on that was not in the State Department channel, using, I'm sure, CIA communications, which Kissinger loved to use. He loved to use the station chiefs and the CIA communications, which he thought were a great deal more secure. So it became known, Kissinger I think told Rogers, and said, "This is just for you, you know, this is not something I want to bring the State Department into but obviously you're the Secretary of State so you have to know, that while I am in Paris for a, I'm going to have talks with the Vietnamese. But, I'm going to, on the side and out of the public view, have a session with Hafez Ismail at the request of Sadat." And the only people that knew that for sure, I think, at the department at that point were Rogers and Joe. But what happened was that apparently one of them said to Henry, "You've got to have somebody with you from my staff. I want somebody representing me. And I nominate Roy Atherton to go." And Kissinger didn't know me. I don't know that he knew me from apples at that point. I certainly had never been involved in any kind of relationship with him before that, except maybe sitting in the back row at a situation meeting with Joe at the table. All I have is a vague recollection of being rather intimidated by this man. And anyway, suddenly, the word was that I would be given tickets. I would be given instructions as to where to go, when to go, and go to a certain hotel and wait until I was contacted to join Henry in his meeting with Hafez Ismail. It turned out that the other person in that hotel was Hal Saunders. And I don't know that Hal and I, whether we knew ahead of time that we were both going to be there or not. But it was a hotel I

had never heard of before; not a bad hotel, kind of an old hotel, a lot of good Parisian charm to it, but certainly not one of the places where you're likely to run into an American tourist group or something. The only person, I did run into somebody who I knew waiting at Dulles airport, was going on the same flight to Paris. And the question was "What are you doing here?" You know and I had "Well, I'm just going over to Paris for a little Middle Eastern business." I didn't say any more than that. Anyway, there's nobody to meet me at the airport. I had to make my way. I had been given the name of the hotel, I can't even remember the name of it now, it was a double barreled name. It had been two hotels at one point, or two villas that had been combined. And so I arrived and there was, Hal Saunders and I shared a double room. And Hal said "Now you know what it's like working for Henry. When the time comes, somebody will contact us." And low and behold, somebody that turned out to be from the CIA station in Paris, who came and said, "You've got a car waiting outside and Kissinger's waiting at the residence. He wants to have a little briefing session for his meeting tomorrow with Hafez Ismail." So Hal and I were whisked over and taken in to the Ambassador's residence. Henry had set up, he had in fact, taken over the residence or at least a good part of it and was sleeping there and he had his office there. And we were ushered into kind of a holding room, sitting room, and the Ambassador was Jack Irwin and he had just arrived. This room was full of his art collection. And out of nowhere Jack Irwin walked into the room and saw Hal and me and he said, "What are you doing here? This is our Ambassador to Paris, what are you doing here?" And we said, "Well, we're here waiting to have a session with Henry on a Middle Eastern matter." And he just looked at us and said, "Does the secretary know this?" And we said, "Yes." And he said, "Okay, that's fine." And he didn't ask anymore questions. And Hal and I were ultimately ushered into the study, and Henry was sitting there with a briefing book that Hal had obviously prepared for him and he was reading it and making some remarks and notes, and asked him questions. Hal did most of the talking. I was being sized up, I was not about to open my mouth unless asked at that stage. I got more comfortable with Henry later that I would open my mouth whether asked or not. But at that stage, I was still a little uncertain about how I was going. I was clearly not part of the inner circle at that stage. Henry at one point turned to me, you know, looked at me and said, "I'm going to do all the recording on this trip. I don't want you sending any separate reports to the department." At that point, with a certain amount of instinct, I said, "I'm not going to send any reports but when I go back, I'm going to obviously have to report from my point of view to the Secretary and to Joe Sisco, who sent me here." And there was this long pause and Henry sort of said, "Okay." Hal told me later that made me with Henry. He said, "If you would have buckled, Henry wouldn't have had any respect for you. Your instincts were absolutely right. It was the right thing to say. From then on, he took you seriously." And I don't know, at the time I didn't think through, I just did what seemed the right thing to do. And so we had the next day, we all went out on this car to a little farm out in the country that was owned by an American. It was a safe house. And had a nice, leisurely, rather enjoyable day. I think Henry's book has a picture, the walk in the garden. I particularly enjoyed it because it turned out that one of Hafez Ismail's advisors in his little delegation was Gamal Barakat, who had been the Egyptian consul general in Aleppo when I opened our consulate in Aleppo back in '57, '58 at the time of the Iraqi revolution. So I saw at least one Egyptian I had known some time ago. And it was an interesting sparring contest with Hafez Ismail, had a brief and he was...

KWS: What was his brief?

RA: His brief was that Sadat could not let this situation go on drifting. I think this was just, wasn't there a Summit Meeting coming up in Moscow soon after that, that summer? And his point was that the situation is intolerable. Sadat has come into office and said he's put his neck out publicly that he's prepared to end the conflict.

KWS: The Summit was May of '72

RA: Well maybe this was after the Summit. Maybe June.

KWS: And then he kicked the Soviets out in July.

RA: Yeah, okay, so we met with him after the Summit. And that was another of the factors, I think, that Sadat had waited for some Soviet-American initiative to come out of the Summit, but it didn't come.

KWS: That must have disappointed him greatly.

RA: And he was very disappointed. And this was his signal that he's trying to get across to Henry that the situation is intolerable. And I would like to end the state of war, but we've got to get an Israeli commitment to withdraw from all the occupied territories. I mean that was his standard line, and it wasn't just Sinai, it was all the occupied territory. And in return, we will end the state of war and belligerency and he didn't at that point, talk about the, which later became the key word was normal, peaceful relations. But he was clearly talking about an end to the conflict. But the main thing was to get Israel out of the territories and in return, do the minimum of what Resolution 242 required of the Arabs. I don't recall much mention on the Palestinian side...

KWS: Did Sadat understand from Henry that this was an election year?

RA: Oh sure. Henry gave a very good seminar about why this was just a totally unrealistic agenda that Sadat was proposing. It was an election year, it was the Israelis felt secure, they had no great pressure. They had no reason to trust Sadat. Why should they give up? They had all these airfields, they built security base in Sinai. No, he gave a good explanation of how the Israelis would view this proposal. You know, it was just something not even to take seriously. I mean, he didn't put it quite that way, but he clearly tried to get across. And there was no budge on the Ismail. He didn't have any leeway in his brief except to listen and, I presume, report back. Now, he didn't, I don't recall anything in that discussion that said in effect, I don't recall anything that I understood at least to be a threat that if this doesn't work, I'm going to have to resort to the military option. I think in retrospect, we should have taken more seriously, not only Sadat's determination not to let the thing drift, but all the intelligence reports. You know, we were

getting about plans to; I'm not sure whether we got them that early on frankly. Listen I'm, let me stop and think a minute...I think this was in early '73 this meeting. This meeting was early '73.

KWS: There were two meetings.

RA: There was one in Washington.

KWS: Armonk, New York, I think.

RA: That was the one that happened the year before. That was '72. The Paris meeting, this was already into spring of '73. Was there another Summit that year? I think probably not. I think this was sort of Sadat's last, you know, the attempt to get the Soviets to help didn't work and he was sort of saying this is the last chance. I think that was the message that was coming through. But it was veiled. I don't recall him saying you know, "If we don't come away with this, with some break through on the diplomatic side, on the political side, then our alternative is going to have to be to create a crisis." I don't recall it ever being said that explicitly.

KWS: When the war broke in '73, you gradually found yourself more and more involved with Joe and then Joe obviously with Henry. Was there any discussion at the State, in the bureau, in Arab-Israeli affairs about any kind of preference for how you would start negotiations? How they might be jump-started after the war started? I'm trying to get at the source of the notion of a conference. I mean I have ideas which people have given me but I'd rather wait for you to respond before I tell you what they are.

RA: I have to say that quite honestly, Ken, I don't recall discussing. I mean, the discussion was focused first of all on ending the fighting and on recognizing that that would then require some diplomatic initiatives. But whether it included the idea that the first step has to be convening a conference, I just don't remember. I can't say it wasn't...

KWS: Then let me take you to Moscow.

RA: Okay.

KWS: And let's talk about 338 and "under appropriate auspices". Tell me about that trip and how you guys ended up drafting 338. Peter Rodman reminds me that the Soviets understood that "under appropriate auspices" would be a conference co-chaired by the Soviet Union.

RA: Oh yeah. No, but I'm just trying to think, no the idea was clearly there by Moscow. What I can't remember was whether that came out of sort of working level discussions and papers.

KWS: Sadat mentioned it in a speech on the 16th of October to the Egyptian parliament. He talked about convening a conference. Kosygin was in Cairo from the 16th to the 19th of October

and apparently reaffirmed the notion that the Soviets wanted a conference. So by the time you got to Moscow...

RA: It was a given.

KWS: I'm not sure who introduced it, other than maybe the Soviets. It wouldn't have been something that Henry would have wanted.

RA: The draft of Resolution 338 was a Soviet draft [drafted in English by the Russians]. The Soviets provided the first words on paper and because of the way Henry operated, we were not having sort of team meetings and getting ready for this. Henry was keeping his own council. He was talking to Joe, mostly to Joe and to Larry, who was on that trip. And the rest of us were kind of there to be, to write up the notes of the meetings and draft things once the decisions were made. I need a message to Golda Meir. I need a this or that. I mean we were the...

KWS: I need to tell our UN ambassador how to introduce this.

RA: Exactly. But it was not a case. It was not a concept of 338. I mean, obviously we went to Moscow because the Soviets had finally begun to get worried about their clients really losing this war. And the tide of battle had begun to change and Henry's sense was this was the time to move towards, you know, to use this as a basis for trying to get a process of some kind of negotiations going. We all knew that. But we knew it because Henry had decided it happened. It wasn't that we were recommending it and he was saying "That's a good recommendation, I'll follow it." He was probably ahead of us. I would say Henry was probably ahead of most of us in seeing this as the opportunity to convert a war situation into a peace process.

KWS: But from a Soviet point of view, if they had realized that they were losing, that their client was losing, they wanted to salvage something for themselves diplomatically.

RA: Well, first of all, they wanted to stop the fighting while there was still some bargaining power on the Arab side. They didn't want to see Sadat's front collapse and all of the Egyptian forces retreat behind the canal. I mean they wanted to stop the fighting at a point where there was still some parity in the balance. But they wanted it because, quite clearly, they felt it was necessary to have a diplomatic process start at the point where the ceasefire took effect. There's no doubt about that. And we did not have, as I recall, a lot of briefing sessions. We were all dog tired. We'd already been working around the clock and suddenly to be told we were leaving at midnight for Moscow when most of us were already getting to the point of being stretched out with fatigue and then sitting on the airplane for two hours, waiting for Henry to finish his dinner with the Chinese, or with the journalist or something before he came to the airplane. So we were essentially two hours late taking off. Had to stop in, what was it, Copenhagen or some place to pick up Hal Saunders, he wanted to join the team. And on to Moscow. And we got into Moscow and put into the guest house in "Lenin Hills?". And the assumption was that we would

sort of have that evening to get ready for the next day. Now the problem in having staff meetings in Moscow was that Henry assumed that we were totally bugged and he had this scrambler tape that would make a lot of background noise. It was supposed to foil the microphones. But it also made it very difficult to talk because it was also interrupting. And so there weren't a lot of consistent staff sessions. We didn't have a safe room or anything like that—that we could sit in and feel we weren't being overheard. And it was really, my first experience in watching Henry modus operandi in this kind of situation and also being in Moscow and dealing with the Soviets. Maybe a little naive at that time about the paranoia of bugging.

KWS: How business is conducted.

RA: How business is conducted. And you'd walk out into the garden to talk about these things, you know. But our assumption was that we had that night to get ourselves ready and get rested. And we were actually having a meal as I recall, when the word came from the Kremlin that Brezhnev wanted to see Henry and his delegation that evening. So we all had to rush and get ourselves presentable and take a couple more pills or something to stay awake and go to this late-night meeting in the Kremlin. Henry did say, he said, "We're not going to make any decisions tonight. We have to go, and leave it to me. I'll just spin it out." And he did, masterfully, you know, he just parried. And finally, the Soviets realized that they weren't going to get anywhere that evening, in getting an agreement on the ceasefire. Henry's sense of timing was great. He sensed the Soviets were panicking, and let them panic a little more. Maybe they'll be easier tomorrow morning. So, it ended up, I'm sure you've heard this story, being invited in for a midnight vodka that Brezhnev had gotten his cups [he got drunk] that evening.

KWS: The next night.

RA: That was the same night. The day we arrived.

KWS: Brezhnev got in his cups..

RA: In his cups. I mean, he was drunk.

KWS: Oh really.

RA: He was slogging back the vodka. The rest of us were being a little more abstemious because we knew that too much of that, we'd all fall asleep and never wake up again. So we did. The result was that we got through that evening without any serious negotiations. A lot of Henry carrying the fencing, verbal fencing operation. And the next morning, the appointed time came and we all piled into the cars and were off to the Kremlin. And there sat around the table in a proper negotiating situation. And the Soviets presented a piece of paper, which was their draft of what became Resolution 338. And we worked from the Soviet draft.

KWS: Was there any discussion...

RA: There may have been discussion between Kissinger and Gromyko, I, you know...

KWS: Okay, I understand.

RA: It's very possible, I don't know. All I know is that when we got there it was a Soviet piece of paper, which accounts for some of the rather awkward language in it because they gave us an English version of something they probably drafted in Russian. And if you read it, it doesn't sound like it was written by somebody whose native language is English, because it wasn't. But we took it as the basis. And it had in there, I think right from the beginning, the "under appropriate auspices" language. And there was a side agreement reduced to a piece of paper which I don't, I've never seen since, between Gromyko and Henry, or maybe it was Joe.

KWS: Peter said they signed it at breakfast.

RA: Now, there was a piece of paper, there was no doubt. Now that I did know. The one thing that I remember most distinctly though about negotiating this document was standing around. You know, Henry would call the delegation over to the corner of the room where we were, and we'd have a whispering conversation about this draft. And you know, it seemed pretty straight forward. It's a very simple draft. And Bill Hyland was there I think. I remember my one contribution, at least I think it was my contribution, where it said "negotiations under appropriate auspices." And I said, "Look, why don't we suggest we put in 'negotiations between the parties'." Put in the words 'between the parties.'" This has always been such an ambiguous thing with the Arabs, negotiations mean you don't have to negotiate directly with each other. Let's make sure that this really means direct negotiations. And that was inserted. And the Soviets didn't balk. They bought it. So they never questioned that the negotiations were going to be face to face. But I just felt it was better to pin it down and nobody have any problems. That was my little contribution to 338.

KWS: You don't remember any of them saying, "Why don't we put in direct negotiations"?

RA: No, I don't remember anyone saying, "Let's go a step further."

KWS: Do you remember any discussions in your whispering sessions in the corner about how you would handle this when you spoke with the Israelis, how would they feel about this, I mean, did you anticipate that Golda was going to be livid?

RA: Yes. Oh well, I think we are realized that this was going to be, the first order of business when we got back was to get messages off to Golda explaining it. And I was asked to prepare a first draft, which if I recall, got changed to the point where it was unrecognizable by the time it finally went out. Because I hadn't developed quite the feel that I got later for how you write, how Henry wrote letters to Golda. The decision was that the Soviets would consult the

Egyptians and we would consult the Israelis and tell them, in effect, that this is what's been decided and we have to move on. And then there was this snafu on communications. Henry insisting that he had to send it through back channel communications rather than the embassies. He didn't trust the embassy communications channel. That delayed the message to Golda, which was an additional embarrassment. I can't remember how late, but it was much delayed in getting to the Israelis, so they also felt that they had not even been given time to react before it was all done.

KWS: It wasn't done intentionally. I mean, he didn't want them to react?

RA: Ask Henry that. I don't know. There are some things about Henry that I never fully understood. And I don't know whether I understood that one. Or ask Larry. Have you seen Larry?

KWS: Not yet.

RA: Because that's the kind of thing, you know, Larry was right at Henry's side. Now the rest of us were not always at Henry's side. Larry was. Joe most of the time. So I think that's the kind of thing you're going to have to ask Larry. He could read Henry's mind better than anybody.

KWS: What about this thing about a power of attorney, Nixon's interference?

RA: Oh, well the letter that Nixon...

KWS: Explain it to me.

RA: Well, I don't know much about it.

KWS: Well, all I'm told by Hal and by Mike Sterner and by Quandt that at some point for the first time during all of this diplomacy in the Middle East, Nixon all of a sudden sends a message to Moscow in which he essentially says "I want to see this."

RA: I want to see...?

KWS: The draft of this resolution.

RA: Well, that I don't remember again at all. What I remember was a message from Nixon to Moscow which said to the Soviets, it said in effect "Henry is coming. He has my full power of authority. Anything he says is fine with me." And Henry didn't like that because he wanted to have the fall back of saying "I have to clear this with the President." And the President thought that he could make all the decisions on the spot. He was unhappy about that.

KWS: It's another example, if what you say is accurate, and I have no reason not to believe it, it's another example of Henry's use of time; wanting to delay in order to put pressure. Is that a fair assumption?

RA: I think that's a fair assumption. He felt that time was on our side at this stage because the Israelis had begun to get off the ropes and come back.

KWS: Later on when he went to Israel, he took Golda into the corner and he said "What do you need in terms of time?"

RA: You have it on good authority that's exactly what he said?

KWS: From Eppi Evron.

RA: Because we all, I've heard and I've never had any reason to doubt it, but I never heard Henry say it is all I can say. It's not the sort of thing he said to all of us in a group. Now I'm going to give the Israelis time to finish this operation.

KWS: He never said that. But he asked her (Golda), "How much time do you need?" And she said "Well, Dayan says I need 48 hours." And he just nodded. But never said, "Yes, you can have it." He just nodded. And of course, there was a delay.

RA: You see, you know, listen, Henry was always, usually a step ahead most of the rest of us in playing out tactics. Nuances of these situations. And I can't say, I mean I'd love to take credit and say "A lot of us that were there to help him thought of this", but Henry was usually kind of a step ahead in his complex mind, was always, I mean, he had the kind of mind that could keep all these things going at one time. Flashes of instinct. I mean he didn't think things, he had instinctual feelings.

KWS: Did you get any notion when you were in Moscow either at night with Brezhnev drinking or the next morning that the Soviets were very, very worried about the destruction of the Third Army?

RA: Oh yes.

KWS: To what degree were they, or the level of anxiety.

RA: The assumption was that they wouldn't first of all, pressed for Henry to come, well the original proposal was either Brezhnev would send somebody to Washington or Nixon should send somebody to Moscow. And the decision was that Kissinger should go to Moscow. That there was a sense of urgency, panic. And I think the feeling was that if we send, my assumption is, Kissinger to Moscow, we have more control over when he leaves, when he arrives, how fast

he lets it go, because Kissinger, at that point, clearly felt the Soviets were beginning to panic and that it was time to take advantage of it, you know. Let's play it out as long as we can without reaching the point where it weakens Sadat to the point where he's not a credible party in any one of the start of negotiations. And he didn't want Sadat to be totally defeated. In fact, I don't know that he really signaled, as you say and others say he did, to Golda that she had more time. I just don't know how much—whether he really was endorsing the idea that there should be a total seeming off of the Third Army. I don't really think so.

KWS: I think he understood how angry she was about Resolution 338 being put before them in a fait accompli; Israel's sovereignty was being trod upon. There was no consultation whatsoever. This was his way of realizing the trauma that the country had gone through. And he realized that.

RA: That became apparent once we landed and had this meeting. They were in a state of real shock.

KWS: Hal said that helped transform Henry's attitude toward how far he could push the Israelis. It didn't change it entirely, but he knew that this country had just been through an enormous torment.

RA: Yeah. No, I think the mood in that meeting was very somber.

KWS: That's the same word that Hal used.

RA: The real tough conversations, of course, did not include me and I'm not sure they included Hal. We had to read in between the lines. I mean Henry was doing all of this off in the corner with Golda. And he did give us, when we got on airplanes, he would bring us in and say "Let me give you the highlights of what I've said and what we've done." We never really knew if he was telling us everything but at least he didn't just totally eliminate us, which I'm told is not always the case these days.

KWS: Just to jump ahead for a moment, when you were ambassador in Egypt, what did you learn about the people who surrounded Sadat at the time, the people that he relied on? Was there anyone particularly...

RA: Not really.

KWS: I mean, he was doing it also by himself?

RA: Yeah, yeah. He and Henry were a great team because they were confident that they knew what they were doing. They knew how to do it and they didn't really need to get free advice from people that were always a step behind them.

KWS: Particularly Fahmi (Egyptian Foreign Minister until November 1977, resigned because of Sadat's visit to Jerusalem).

RA: Fahmi, later Muhammad Ibrahim Kamel (Egyptian Foreign Minister in 1977-1978, resigned after and because of the Camp David negotiations, September 1978)

KWS: Tell me a little bit about how the Israelis greeted you when you got to Jerusalem. [Peter]Rodman said that Israel was insulted that Kissinger had winked, that Kissinger had trod upon Israeli sovereignty, but then he winked at the Israelis so that they could continue the encirclement of the Third Army. Those are Peter's words to me. You know, the Israelis are very clever. They would say "Yes, you trod upon our sovereignty," and they knew that they might extract time from Henry by acting really hurt. I don't want to sound too cynical or conspiratorial, but Mordechai Gazit tells me that they played on Henry's feelings that he had really pushed Israel a little bit too far. And Golda intentionally made it appear that she was more hurt than she really was.

RA: They were pretty impressive the awfully good actors if that were the case. Because the room was that way, it wasn't just Golda. And I don't honestly think that she could have orchestrated that kind of a mood. The mood was there. She may have hyped it.

KWS: Right. She took it to just a little bit higher of a level. How was "appropriate auspices" explained to the Israelis? How did you explain "appropriate auspices"? (this section is repeated in the MP3)

RA: Well, again, Henry had a lot of these talks on the side with Golda. The rest of us were, I think, it was the kind of thing that always happened. Henry was talking to Golda and the next layer was sort of pairing off with us.

KWS: Joe was with Epi Evron and...

RA: And I tried to remember who I was with. We were all getting quizzed. And quite clearly it was orchestrated. They were all going to go back and say "Now Atherton said this but Sisco said this, and where does the truth lie?"

KWS: (Laughter)

RA: And the answer was this means US-Soviet sponsored negotiations. That was clearly the case, and I don't recall any reason to...

KWS: Any response from the Israelis that you can recall.

RA: No, I don't recall.

KWS: Let's turn to Jordan for a moment. What kind of contact did we have with the Jordanians up until this point that you recall? You were in Moscow. Was anyone thinking about the Palestinians, the Jordanians? Someone mentions a conference, someone said, "Hey, is the King going to be there? Do we have to contact Rifai?"

RA: Well, I wish I could remember Ken, whether we sent messages also to Jordan through Moscow and I'm so conscious, I believed we'd get the Israelis briefed.

KWS: That was your focus?

RA: That was the focus. And I honestly don't recall whether we, at that stage, were sending messages to anybody else. There were lots of messages going out. There were instructions from the UN. It may well be that that included instructions to call in the ambassadors of Jordan and the other states. Brief them. In fact it would be almost routine to do that.

KWS: Joe said one of the messages to the UN ambassador was to introduce this and don't allow any amendments. In fact, the messages were sent conterminously to the US ambassador and the Soviet ambassador.

RA: No, that's right. There was no question that we didn't want any fiddling with it. But I think it must have also included instructions to the U.N. ambassador, brief the other Middle Eastern heads of delegations, which would clearly have been the Jordanians and I presumed that we talked to the Syrians at that stage. I guess we did. After all, the Syrians had been part of this war. And they were suddenly not even a factor. We were assuming the Soviets, I guess, were taking care of dealing with the Syrians. We didn't have any real contacts with the Syrians.

KWS: Scotese was the only contact.

RA: I mean the real opening, umm,

KWS: It was the Chargé D'Affaires had someone at an interest section.

RA: Not when this war began. Scotese only came after Kissinger had made his first visit to, after his first visit. And decided that there were no Americans there.

KWS: I did not know that.

RA: The intersection in Damascus was staffed by Italians and there was no American. We had no Americans talking to Syrians, except maybe in New York.

KWS: So we really did go blind when we went to Damascus.

RA: Absolutely blind. I think we sent somebody ahead at that stage, to sort of prepare the logistics and the security and all those things. But we had nobody, no American in the intersection. Scotes was only sent out there after Kissinger had had his first contacts with Assad.

KWS: Maybe that was a result of it, is that we would have someone there.

RA: Yeah. So, I don't recall any communications with the Syrians. Or even thinking about it. Certainly not the Palestinians. The Palestinians were the last thing on anybody's mind. The Jordanians and the Saudis, after all the Saudis by that time lowered the boom on us on oil, and so I suspect that messages went either from the party or back to Washington, instructions to ambassadors in the field and the UN to brief our friends, which meant clearly the Jordanians and the Saudis. I can't remember whether it included any of the other Arabs, but the real preoccupation was getting the Israelis aboard.

KWS: Because the Third Army was...[surrounded by the Israeli forces on the west bank of the Canal]

RA: Yeah.

KWS: Was the problem.

RA: And I think, you know, Kissinger, he did realize that, he did begin to worry about the Third Army, about the destruction of the Third Army at some point because he was going to lose Sadat. You know, all during this war there were messages going back and forth between Sadat and Kissinger, but back channel messages that Hafez Ismail's name would appear on, to Kissinger and Kissinger to him. In which Sadat reassured Kissinger that he didn't have any intention, he was liberating his territory, he had no intention of destroying Israel. He knew that he couldn't. He still was committed to the idea of peace, the settlement. This was a limited war. Don't feel you've got, the American community is safe. Don't feel you've got to evacuate your people. It was really a very bizarre situation.

KWS: Bill said it began on the second day of the war.

RA: Yeah, it was right through the beginning. These I was aware of, and not that we saw the messages, but these we were briefed about. That there was a back channel going on all the time with the Egyptians. But it was back channel with a little bit of mental reservation about how much you really believe what this guy is saying. We weren't at that point that convinced.

KWS: What convinced him? I mean, besides the combination of using power with diplomacy.

RA: I think Henry never became totally convinced until the 6th of November when he went to Cairo and met Sadat. And that meeting was a transforming event. I mean, Kissinger came out of

that saying here's a man that I can take seriously. I think I misjudged him all along. He had already begun to realize that he misjudged him. We all had. But I don't think that his final judgment, I can totally trust Sadat, we're going to work together and I don't have to play games, probably didn't happen until we had that meeting on that first Middle East trip.

KWS: And that was his first meeting with Sadat ever?

RA: That was his first meeting with Sadat. Rogers had met with Sadat, Joe had met with Sadat, I was with Joe and Rogers when they met with Sadat. Mike Sterner knew Sadat pretty well because he had been Sadat's escort officer when he came over as speaker of the Parliament.

KWS: When he was head of Egyptian affairs.

RA: Yeah. But with all of that, you know there was no one who knew Sadat in earlier periods. But I guess nobody, certainly at least that I'm aware of, maybe a lot of people in retrospect have revised what they thought, really understood the stature.

KWS: What had changed in Sadat's mind? What made November 6th so important? I mean Sadat had made it a pre-condition for negotiations, there would be full withdrawal from all fronts, there was going to be comprehensive peace. All of a sudden...

RA: Kissinger persuaded him that was a non-starter strategy and that he better take Kissinger's advice about how you begin to move the Israelis back. And you don't tell them they're going to have to go all the way. And you talk in terms of step by step, disengagement of forces.

KWS: Where did the interim stage, phased idea come from? From Henry?

RA: The idea of not going entirely to....

KWS: I mean this had gone back to '71, you guys had talked about... Your suggestions were, the American suggestions, were do this in piece-meal. And now Henry's coming back...

RA: But the piece-meal in Sadat's mind was such a big piece that it was non-starter in '71 and it was a non-starter from Henry's account. And after all, there is no written record in our files of that meeting. The best record of it, if you read Ed Sheehan's book, or his article in *Foreign Policy*, originally, in his book, spelled out, he has an account of Sadat's meeting with Kissinger. And while, a lot of the things that Sheehan has, he got from a briefings that I gave him. Because Henry authorized it, although later he denied that he authorized it. But I had never seen a memcon of that meeting and that's because there wasn't one.

KWS: Peter [Rodman] said he wasn't in the meeting.

RA: No. No one was in the meeting because it was just Sadat and Kissinger. So the account of that meeting in Ed Sheehan's book, he got from the Egyptian sources. Because I can remember Henry, when he began to realize that maybe I had been too literal in taking his instructions, it was all right to brief Sheehan. He got rather angry with me, but he said that "You must have given him really great detailed accounts." I said "I gave him what I thought he needed in order to have a straight story. I obviously didn't give him documents and I didn't give him verbatim quotes and things." I said, "I did not give him anything about your meeting with Sadat." And Henry said "Of course not. There isn't any record of that meeting. You don't know either." (laughing) He enjoyed that very much. But he never said it was a wrong account, by the way. But it had to come from Sadat or somebody that Sadat had given the account to.

KWS: But Sheehan's source was pretty good? You read it?

RA: I read it and I think it's all, the ironic thing about that Sheehan episode was that it was designed to try to explain to the reading public that Henry had done a masterful job of dealing with the Middle East and ought to get a lot of credit for it. I mean it was a positive. The article comes out, in most cases, making Henry look good. It isn't 100% that way, but on balance it came out making Henry look good and that was Sheehan's objective. And I think Henry eventually, although he was very angry at the time about some of the details that came out, came to understand that it was good for his image as Secretary of State and how he handled this crisis.

KWS: Tell me what you knew about the Kilometer 101 Talks. Did you know anything about the detail?

RA: Not very much.

KWS: Were you aware at all that Henry didn't like them?

RA: There was no question that Henry didn't, I mean, he made that very clear when he began to get feedback on them. No, no, he didn't hide his unhappiness about the fact, it was Gamasy and Yariv wasn't it? They, in effect, were going to leave him nothing to do. They were going to come to an agreement and Henry would have had nothing to do with it. And I don't think it was just egotism, although that probably was a part of it, but I think it was also Henry's feeling that this was part of a much bigger game he had in mind. And if this were settled without becoming part of a strategy that had a next step, that he would lose the chance to manipulate the next round and the next round and the next round, etcetera. I mean, Henry already had it pretty clearly in mind and he and Sadat had basically agreed in that first session I think to give up the insistence on Israeli withdrawal to the October 22nd lines. Don't waste your time trying to figure out where the October 22nd line was. Let's look beyond this to a much larger series of disengagements. And if the two sides had come to some agreement at the military level, it might have tied his hands for future, for organizing the next steps. So I think Henry's concern was not just that this was going on without his being a part of it, but his strategy was not to solve it that quickly. Buy

time. You know, don't just solve it. The immediate military problem probably can be solved, if we leave it to the generals. But let's not leave it to the generals because there are political dimensions beyond this and we need more time to let it cook.

KWS: Was it any part of Henry's priorities to think about similar interim withdrawals or phased withdrawals on either the Syrian or Jordanian front at this juncture? Now, we're talking some place, mid-November, end of November, before we get to Geneva, before the Algiers Arab Summit meeting, was he under any kind of request from Sadat, "Hey, you know, you have to do something also for the Syrians and for the Jordanians. I can't do this alone."

RA: He was getting, I think it even began on that November trip, from the Saudis and through Omar Sakkaff "Don't forget the Syrians, they've got to be part of whatever you do." This was an idea that the Saudis really did, I think, force Henry to bring this into his radar screen, that there is a Syrian dimension here.

KWS: There was no mention of the Jordanians?

RA: I don't recall any mention of the Jordanians at that stage. The assumption was that the Jordanians would come along with whatever everybody else agreed to. They weren't in the war. After all the war was, the disengagement was to be a disengagement of forces where they were at the end of the '73 fighting, on the 22nd of October. And there you have this totally mixed up situation with Israelis on the West Bank of the canal and Egyptians on the East Bank of the canal. And you had the Israelis having pushed past the old green line, further towards...past the cease fire lines, the '67 cease fire lines on Golan. They were beyond that and they were within striking range, well and even easy artillery range in Damascus. And the main road in Damascus, the north-south road to the southern part of Syria, the one that goes down to the border to Amman. So, the urgency was to restore something like the pre-lines but obviously not precisely because the Arabs had to show that they'd gained something out of this war, on the ground.

KWS: Were you aware of any entreaties from King Hussein? Joe said in the USIP [United States Institute of Peace, 1991] meeting on April 3rd, he said "I think the weakness point came when we had a crucial decision as Roy will recall, as to whether we responded positive to King Hussein's strong feeling, quote, "Give me anything. I don't care whether it's 5 kilometers by way of a disengagement agreement. You've gotten one for the Egyptians, you're going to get one for the Syrians. I've got to have something.""

RA: Yeah.

KWS: Abba Eban remembers it this way. He said "The fate of the Geneva conference was the inability to arrive at an agreement with Jordan. Had there been an Israeli deal with the King, he wouldn't have been humiliated when he went to Rabat." [Arab Summit conference in October 1975-PLO anointed as sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people].

RA: My recollection of the King's pleading for something was only after the, I don't recall that becoming official until after the Syrian agreement had been, if not totally locked in, at least...

KWS: The New York Times reported in January 1974 that there were secret Jordanian-Israeli talks about a disengagement accord. Mordechai Gazit confirms that.

RA: In January? Cause that was when the first disengagement agreement was.

KWS: First disengagement was January 18th. And he said already in January, they and the Jordanians had talked about the possibility of a disengagement accord. Then there was the turmoil in the Israeli government.

RA: When did Rabin become Prime Minister?

KWS: In April. And as soon as he became Prime Minister, Henry apparently approached him [King of Jordan] and Rabin said "Don't force me to do this, I can't do this now." And Golda had said it previously "You can't expect us to make a territorial withdrawal from this most sensitive area when we haven't even gotten something from the Egyptians." And then there was sort of, "Well, you can't expect us to do anything because we haven't gotten anything from the Syrians yet."

RA: I remember only after Rabin came, it became an issue. if it was discussed before, I've drawn a blank. But I do recall the general context of all of these discussions was that you have to start with the 2 places where the fighting took place in '73'. And there was no fighting on the Jordanian front. You've got to disentangle the Egyptian-Israeli and the Syrian-Israeli forces, priorities because the current situation is so unstable and the war could break out again. And now's the time when there's a certain fluidity to strike some limited agreements. And I honestly don't recall that there was ever serious consideration to putting Jordan ahead of Syria for example. My recollection was that it was going to be a Syrian disengagement, the Saudis were already saying "Once you get that, you've got to get the Syrians engaged." And I just don't recall anybody saying "Let's go for a Jordanian one first."

KWS: You're right about the timing. Sisco continued at the USIP (United States Institute for Peace Meeting in April 1991); he said "There were two considerations that we weighed at the time. One, Rabin said, the West Bank is very sensitive. I'm not sure they can survive this in the aftermath of what has occurred. And secondly, there was the very fact at that point that Nixon was at a weak stage." And then Sam [Lewis] said, this was the summer '74, Sisco said yes, and then you interjected "Rabin was not very strong at this point," and Sisco said "No, he wasn't." And then you continued "He had a weakness, as I recall, and that's why they couldn't move forward."

RA: But we're talking now about after Rabin came into office. But you said there were some reports that way back in January...

KWS: Not reports, but it's confirmed now from the Israelis that there were discussions between the Jordanians and the Israelis. I mean, I have no doubt about that.

RA: All right.

KWS: [Former Jordanian] Prime Minister Rifai has said that to me.

RA: Okay.

KWS: But apparently it wasn't on our [US]screen.

RA: It was not on our screen. It clearly wasn't on our screen. It wasn't on the screen at my level, at least, because my level was still the Deputy Assistant Secretary, which is a pretty lowly position when you look at where the decision is, when the desk officer is Henry Kissinger, and I was a deputy to his desk officer.

KWS: Why did you get the notion that OMAR Sirry (Egyptian Foreign Ministry legal affairs adviser, October- December 1973) wanted to go to a conference? What made you go to Damascus?

RA: Oh, the opening to Damascus was clearly in response to the strong urgings from the Saudis to open up the dialogue with the Syrians. It was not something that, again, I wish some of us could take credit for saying it's important to bring the Syrians in, but it was really the Saudis pressing Kissinger.

KWS: And Henry responded for what reason?

RA: Because he had respect for Omar Sakaff (Saudi Minister of Foreign Affairs) and, you know, he wanted to get the Saudis to lift the oil embargo. And therefore, we better listen to them and do what they recommend. And also, he had a good relationship with Omar Sakaff. He felt Sakaff was giving him, it was advice he listened to. And so the decision was made to make a trip to Damascus. And Kissinger says somewhere, whether it was in his book or in one of his speeches or statements of some kind or a toast he gave at some point, I don't remember, but he said he often discovered when he went to places in the Middle East that there were some Saudi footprints in the sand there ahead of him. And they found that was very true in Syria.

KWS: Patrick Seale in his biography of Assad said that Saunders characterized the trip to Damascus as "Flying into Damascus after 6 years of no relations was like going to China. We weren't quite sure of what we were going to find."

RA: Umm hmm.

KWS: What was discussed at the meeting? How did the meeting, were you in the meeting?

RA: No.

KWS: You weren't.

RA: Nobody was in the meeting. Peter, I guess, was there, and Henry and Assad. The rest of us, no, it was the typical operation. The whole delegation was brought to this, put in the sort of holding area, the ground floor of the presidential office building and the assumption was Henry was ushered up for a private tet-a-tet. And I guess, obviously he had an interpreter. I don't remember whether he did, yeah. What was the name of the Palestinian American (Issa Sabbagh) who ended up being Henry's interpreter in all of this? Oh, it'll come to me. Anyway, the assumption was that the delegations would be called to join the meeting. The clocked ticked on and time went by and we were already late for dinner in Amman because we had an invitation to dinner that evening with King Hussein. And nothing came out of the meeting. And once the door opened we thought at last it's picking up, it was Henry going to the bathroom and then he went back in and closed the door again. And the meeting went on. I forget now. It was hours.

KWS: It was supposedly a six hour meeting.

RA: Yeah. And we sat twiddling our thumbs.

KWS: Joe wasn't in the meeting? Because there was...

RA: Well, I can't say for sure Joe wasn't.

KWS: Joe recalls it. And he recalls it as, you know, sitting on with this meeting and going through this letter of invitation until he got to the very end.

RA: Oh no, that was much later. That meeting, that was not the first meeting with Assad.

KWS: There was a meeting on the 15th, a six hour meeting.

RA: No, but the very first meeting with Assad was not a meeting in which there was any...

KWS: So there may have been two meetings on the same trip.

RA: Yeah, I'm quite sure that the, I mean, I think Henry, at that point, was talking to Assad about how we organize a conference. But I don't really believe that that first meeting that he was laying out the text or a proposed letter. That came...

KWS: So you didn't take off for Amman right away. You had to be, it either had to be two meetings on the same trip. Seale said you all were in Damascus one day, on December 15th. Yeah (after checking some notes, I presume), Kissinger met with Syrian leaders in Damascus and then flew to Jordan.

RA: After, and had a very late dinner with King Hussein at his palace. But I frankly, I thought he went back again to Damascus at some time to try to hammer out the details of this letter of invitation.

KWS: There is only one meeting, on anyone's record.

RA: Well, I guess you're right.

KWS: Okay. Why do you suppose...

RA: You know, I think that's worth checking, just to be absolutely sure. I don't know where you get the chronology on Henry.

KWS: This is the Middle East Journal's chronology. And I've also gone through The New York Times. Now, unless he went back secretly.

RA: No, no. Okay.

KWS: Even Patrick Seale in his autobiography was...

RA: Yeah, okay. I frankly thought that there was at least one other session.

KWS: There could have been two sessions in one day.

RA: No, no. That meeting started late and it went for six hours and we got off and went out to the airport. We were having dinner that evening with...

KWS: Because Joe insists that he was at the end of that meeting, they had gone through the letters of invitation. Okay, there's a quote that he said...

RA: I would take Joe's recollection on this because I was not in the meeting and therefore, less, maybe less of a memory. What about, who else was with us on that? Peter (Rodman) was there obviously. Does Peter also remember that it was just the one meeting? Well, alright then. Their memories clearly better than mine.

KWS: But why did Assad choose not to go to Geneva?

RA: I don't know, I never heard from Assad why he said no. I mean, it's only my own sort of inferences from knowing the Syrians. But, I have to assume that he was not sure he had his whole domestic base lined up. He would just accept it, that he would take the risk.

KWS: Yeah, he was getting some flack from radical elements of the masses

RA: That was my assumption.

KWS: That's a major point which Joe makes.

RA: Now, I'm pretty sure that some...

KWS: And he also knew he wasn't going to get anything back.

RA: Convoluted internal Ba'ath party, with power structure, consideration.

KWS: But he also knew he wasn't get anything back physically. You know the Israelis were not prepared to give him anything.

RA: And then, as now, the Syrians were reluctant to go, I mean, they see sitting at the same table with the Israelis as already a concession for which they should get something in return.

KWS: Everything in return.

RA: Which is one of the breakthroughs of Madrid. That they eventually did go to these talks without anything in return, except the promise that there would be an agenda that could begin to...

KWS: Any sense on how Assad or the Syrians viewed the Russians.

RA: Oh I think as somebody that they could manipulate and use and play off against the Americans. It was not a case of great affection of love lost, but they certainly, I think, felt more comfortable dealing with us because they had the Soviet card.

KWS: You remember Ellsworth Bunker's appointment as Ambassador to the Geneva Conference?

RA: Yeah. I don't remember Ellsworth with us on any of the preliminary trips...

KWS: No, none at all.

RA: He showed up at Geneva.

KWS: He was appointed on December 14th and he showed up at Geneva.

RA: Yeah.

KWS: And Michael Sterner stayed on after Ellsworth went home.

RA: When did we, when did this Middle East trip start?

KWS: On the 13th, Kissinger met in Algeria with President Boumediene before flying to Cairo for talks with Sadat. On the 14th, Ellsworth is appointed, the 14th Kissinger went to Riyadh, then he went also on the 14th to Cairo. Kissinger, on the 15th, met with the Syrians, then went on to Jordan. Then on the 17th he was in Israel with Meir and described the talks as very constructive with her. And after that trip the Israeli officials said Israel agreed to have the peace talks in Geneva after Kissinger had assured Israel of firm US support at the talks.

RA: And we had by that time, the letter of invitation...

KWS: That you guys had drafted to be sent by Waldheim.

RA: Yeah. But it was agreed by that point by the Israelis and the Syrians, you know, they didn't go. And the Jordanians and the Egyptians had all agreed to the language.

KWS: Right. The Israelis still wanted assurances aside from the letters.

RA: They always wanted side assurances. I can't remember a time when they didn't want something extra.

KWS: Twenty-point memorandum of understanding or something.

RA: But the, well, of course, one of the remarkable things about that letter was how none of the Arabs bled and died to make sure the Palestinians got to the conference. That was that language that said that the question of other participants in the conference will be dealt with in a future period. And everyone knew that meant the Palestinian representation issue was put on hold, so as not to disrupt the conference. I mean, there was no question about it that they, even the Syrians, weren't at that point going to die for the Palestinians.

KWS: Tell me about the conference. Tell me about Geneva (The Geneva Middle East Peace Conference, December 1973) .

RA: Three-ring circus, I guess.

KWS: (Laughter) What a great description.

RA: We went...

KWS: Or if you want to before that, talk about how the procedures were...

RA: Well, there hadn't, I mean, we got in, as I recall, late in the day and the conference was supposed to convene the next day. We had to have conferences bilaterally with the UN people and with Waldheim's people. Waldheim I guess was there. Henry and he were probably meeting. And with the Soviets. I mean there was a sort of ritualistic touching-base bilaterally with all the delegations. And the UN decision about the seating, about how you were going to organize the delegations at the table, and the shape of the table, and it began to come apart. They made certain assumptions and it became apparent in these consultations that none of the Arabs wanted to sit next to the Israelis. That was still not resolved the next morning. The opening was delayed for some time while Waldheim sort of talked to the various parties. And I think, my recollection is, again I wasn't part of the talks, it was relayed to me that the final solution was one that Gromyko gets credit for. That he would agree to sit next to the Israeli delegation so that no Arab had to. And the empty table on the other side of the Israelis was for the Syrians. We had names on the table. The name of Syria was on the table. You get a photograph of that conference and you'll find that each delegation had the name, and there was a Syria in front of these empty seats. A name card.

KWS: Was there any notion that there would be any political discussions at Geneva? Or this was just going to be a...

RA: I think it was pre-cooked. All of us assumed that this was to go through the motions. Everybody making a statement for the record, every delegation. And that the result of it would be that it was agreed ahead of time, and it would be summed up by Waldheim as it was that the conference would adjourn. There were negotiations on the disengagement of forces as a first step towards reconvening the conference, working towards comprehensive peace and all those good things. And my recollection is that this was sort of something that everybody agreed ahead of time that because of an understanding between Sadat and Kissinger, nobody could object to it. It wouldn't do them any good to object. The Soviets had to understand this. Kissinger kept them briefed and on the string. But basically the understanding was that he had been asked by Sadat to negotiate a disengagement and that this would relieve the potentially volatile, unstable situation. Might lead to a renewal of the fighting on that front and once that was stabilized, I'm not sure whether already at that point there had been a decision that the next step had to be a Syrian disengagement. But certainly the Syrians wanted it and the Saudis wanted us to do it and Sadat, I think wanted it. So I guess...

KWS: Do you remember where this notion of you know, we'd break out into two talks, political talks, military talks, Military Committee, Political Committee. Do you remember any discussion of that? I mean, as it turned out they sort of ended up being truncated anyway and Henry took it to his person and went off and did a lot of talking with Sadat anyway. Nothing really happened with the political talks and Vladamir Vinogradov (USSR Ambassador to Egypt, 1970-1974) sitting there in Geneva, all very pissed that nothing's happening and no one's talking to him. And

Sterner is there alone after Christmas because everyone else has left and Henry goes off to Sadat and the Israelis. This sounds like it was a rubric that was set up...

RA: It was a Ellsworth Bunker (he had negotiated the Panama Canal Treaty and Vinogradov (Soviet Ambassador to Egypt), where they sort of...

KWS: Right. They apparently had 4 or 5 meals together and that was about it.

RA: They were there to sort of symbolize the continuity of the Geneva conference. And they were there waiting for the conference to reconvene and for the principals to come back.

KWS: You know, Ellsworth died in office as ambassador of the Geneva conference. (laughing)

RA: No, I didn't realize that. But I can remember, you know, Ellsworth was there for quite some time. He came back after Christmas, 'cause Ellsworth was still there at the time of the Syrian-Israeli disengagement.

KWS: Well, he had come home.

RA: He had come home but he was back in Geneva.

KWS: Sterner said he had to get home to Vermont for Christmas.

RA: Oh yeah. No, Mike was the sacrificial lamb. I mean, I can remember leaving Geneva, we had set up Christmas decorations in our hotel room in Geneva. Those of us from the delegation, because we didn't know whether we were going to get home for Christmas or not, and then suddenly it was obvious that only Sterner was going to be asked to sacrifice his Christmas. Because I remember flying directly back to Boston because that's where my family was gathering. It turned out that Boston Logan Airport was closed because of a snowstorm and had to go to Washington and drive all the way back to Boston. I actually got in Christmas eve to where the family all was, outside of Boston. But Ellsworth was just a very good soldier. I don't know how much Henry said here, just there as a symbol, but Ellsworth was smart enough to realize that. But he was also, you know, that was the kind of person Ellsworth was. He would stand up and salute and do what was asked of him, and give his advice when asked, and usually when asked, it was very shrewd and realistic.

KWS: Any sense of what the Soviet role would actually be or UN role actually be?

RA: It was not ever made very clear. And I think it was not made very clear to the Soviets. Kissinger, my impression is that Kissinger held out, good things were coming. Be patient, let's get this step out of the way and as a token of my good intentions I am appointing a personal representative to meet with your man, Vinogradov, in Geneva. And I don't know when it was but Gromyko finally realized that he was being had, during the Syrian disengagement agreement.

Because remember that after the first disengagement agreement, the military working group, the Egyptian's military working group, met in Geneva to put together the annexes and the time table for withdrawal and all of this. And there was a Soviet and an American observer at those talks. The American observer was Hal Saunders. And whoever the Soviet counterpart was. Actually sat in the room, not at the table, when the next step came, which was, I don't know, it's still after the Syrian-Israeli disengagement agreement. (May-June 1974). The military working group met to do the same thing. And I was then the person that was there and there was a Soviet counterpart. The Soviets were there with me, whoever it was. The third time this happened after the second Egyptian-Israeli, (Agreement, September 1975) the Soviets pulled out. There was no Soviet. They declined to participate by that time. So some time, the disillusion had set in if not during, then very soon after, the Syrian-Israeli agreement, when no conference was reconvened.

KWS: Tell me quickly about those military meetings, the military talks that took place after the Syrian-Israeli agreement.

RA: Well, the first one, you'd have to talk to Hal about those because he was there.

KWS: I have.

RA: The second one, the Syrians did not want to have the Syrian-Israeli military working group.

KWS: It was signed in the context of the Egyptian-Israeli...

RA: It was therefore decided that the Syrians would meet under the auspices of or as a, or within.[the Egyptian-Israeli agreement – military working group under the auspices of Geneva]..

KWS: That's in fact, how their agreement was signed.

RA: That's right. Because they wouldn't agree to a separate one. They would do this within the Egyptian-Israeli military working group.

KWS: And they were adamant that there was no recognition of Israel that could be done until, this was a political thing.

RA: And they had a political advisor, the Syrians did at that meeting. A foreign ministry man named Salah Tarazi, who was one of the senior, sort of career diplomats in the Syrian foreign ministry. And he was there as an advisor to the Syrian military group. And sat at the table, as I recall. See, I was there in the back row as an observer. Ellsworth didn't go to these meetings. Ellsworth and Vinogradov were above this. This was for the working citizens. This was a working group and they were there when the plenary reconvened. So I sat through it with my Soviet counterpart, not saying a word. But it was fun to observe because (UN General) Siilasvuo who was there representing Waldheim, in a sort of horseshoe shaped table, sat at the center and I

guess the Syrians here and the Israeli here. And the Egyptian General Maghdub was there representing, to make it clear that it was an Egyptian-Israeli working group. He sat with the Syrians basically. And when the discussions began to work out the details for disengagement, the time tables and the schedules and all that, you know, we had to draw lines on maps and get ready to initial the maps. The Israelis would always look straight across the table at the Syrians and address them. The Syrians would look at Siilasvuo and respond. They would never look across or talk directly to the Israelis. And during the coffee break, General Maghdub would float back and forth between the Israeli and the Syrian representatives to try to work things out that could be done better in the corridors than at the table. The Syrians played it right to the hilt. But they did have their political advisor there and he made some political statements, I can recall, for the record. But he made them to the UN chairman and not to the Israelis. They never shook hands, they never talked together. Mahgdub was very proper with the Israelis, they all got along fine. Maghdub, I don't know what happened, he eventually got diplomatic appointment with some ambassador in Prague or someplace. But he was a Nubian, very easy going, good humored, professional soldier, with no hang-ups about sitting down and talking and having coffee with the Israelis.

KWS: Do you remember the Jordanians at the Geneva conference?

RA: Well, Zaid Rifai (Jordanian Prime Minister) was head of the delegation, that I remember. And they had some, I think, Palestinians on the delegation.

KWS: Yeah. But Rifai's speech, if you go back and read them, is the most hard-line of all the speeches.

RA: Yes. My recollection was that it was very hard-line. Without reading it again, I mean, it was...

KWS: Here's a list of the...

RA: Rafai is still hard-line. I saw him on this last trip.

KWS: Did you?

RA: You know, observing things with his principle.

KWS: How is he?

RA: Well, he says he doesn't see all that much difference between Rabin and Shamir. I mean, he's being pretty hard-line. Pretty pessimistic.

KWS: Here's a list of the Jordanians who attended.

RA: Abdul Hadi-Majali. Isn't he the one who's now head of the Jordanian delegation to...?

KWS: No, that's Abdelsalam Majali (later became Jordan's Prime Minister in the 1980s)

RA: Abdelsalam Majali, sorry. But you have a number of Palestinians here. Yeah, I must admit, I don't remember very many of them. [Nabulsi- Palestinian]

KWS: Let me take a look.

RA: While you do that, I'm going to have to step into the men's room for a moment.

KWS: I'm going to have to do the same.

RA: I'll stop wandering so much and try to be more brisk in answering your questions.

KWS: No, no. That's quite all right. I lack information about the discussions with the Syrians on Syrian-Israeli disengagement. On this Herculean, 31-day, 32-day, whatever it was, April, May of '74, of the kinds of discussions that went on... I know the Israelis didn't want to deal with the Syrians until the Syrians provided the POW list. I know they had the greatest amount of consternation, anxiety and worry about the Syrians. Whenever I went with Carter to Israel after Damascus and the 3 times in the 80's, --'83, '87, '90,-- no one would ever ask you know, what's going on in Jordan, what's going on in Egypt. They'd always want to know something about the enigma of Assad. I mean he plays in their minds differently than any other Arab leader. When you dealt with Assad, when you dealt with the Syrians discuss for me, if you can, recount for me what you remember about the negotiating process. About how stiff they were, how flexible, what were the areas of accommodation? Was it strictly just a kilometer here and a kilometer there and a tank here and a tank there? Try and recall it in whatever way you can.

RA: There was an awful lot of time spent talking about other things than the details of the agreement. Henry always spent a good bit of time after each, at the beginning of each meeting, which meant he had just come from Israel, giving a little precis of mood in Israel, what he heard, his judgments of what was possible, what wasn't possible. A little civics lesson if you will. And also, a bit of how it was played in the American political scene. And Assad listened, and was very good at listening and asking very sharp questions. The conversation, I thought, was at a, I thought, a very sophisticated level, obviously on Henry's side but also on Assad's side. But when it turned to the text, to the actual terms of the disengagement negotiation, it quickly got down to precisely a tank here and a gun there, a kilometer here and a coordinate there and what about those observation posts on Mt. Hermon and we have to get back territory that we lost in '67 that we had recovered at the beginning of the war. I mean, it was very important to Assad to be able to say that the final line, I mean this was clear from the beginning, it was just a case of how you got from here to there. That whatever the final line, the disengagement line to which the Israelis would pull back, had to leave under no longer under Israeli control, some territory that the Israelis had held when the war broke out from '67. There had to be some symbolic recovery of

territory that had been occupied at the time of the '67 war. And of course, it started out with you know, a third, a half of the Golan, and ended up being meters, literally. But Assad did all of this, you know, I mean he had his military people there. And he would occasionally turn and ask them a question, but he was the negotiator of even the minutest detail. As was Henry. You know, I mean, they were the ones that were talking coordinates, meters, and yards, and the hills, what came to be called (Israeli General) Motti Gur's "mountains," the high ground west of Kuneitra. I can't tell you how many hours was spent discussing...

The Israelis insisting that they had to maintain the advantage of having observation posts on these really not very big hills. They looked like little ant hills. But they were higher ground, west of Kuneitra. And if you asked me to tell you how it was finally all resolved, I'm not sure I could even tell you anymore. It was that kind of a torturous detailed negotiation. Those of us who were sitting in the room were there basically to try to make coherent records of this, the note-takers. I can remember sessions where two of us would be spelling each other because if you go on for 3 or 4 or 5 hours, you cannot keep your head and your hands working that fast. And Bob Moklowski and I at some point ended up being, taking turns spelling each other. We would sort of look and nod when we said we can't do it anymore, you take over. And then getting those transcribed in ways that made sense, trying to record the right figures for the coordinates on the map. I'm not sure how much it all meant in the final analysis.

KWS: Never a discussion about politics or a political relationship or anything beyond this.

RA: Well, only to the extent that, you know, the model was the Egyptian-Israeli agreement and the idea was to try to get some language in the Syrian-Israeli agreement that said this is only, this is not a final settlement; it's only a step towards comprehensive peace. And there is some language, I can't remember, it differs, it's not as, it's less explicit. I'd have to go back and re-read the...

KWS: Did Assad ever make any indication that he thought there should be a Jordanian-Israeli agreement?

RA: I don't recall it if he did. If he did, I don't recall it.

KWS: I'm sure there were discussions about the Palestinians.

RA: Oh, there was discussion about the Palestinians and Assad was always saying, you know, the Palestinians have to be included in the negotiations.

KWS: But did he ever explicitly state what that would mean?

RA: Well, mostly, he (Assad), was telling us that we should not pay any attention to Fatah and all of those people and Arafat. That the Palestinians which you should deal with were "al-Saika"

(the Syrian sponsored Palestinian element within the PLO) The real Palestinians are the ones you should be, who should be involved after al-Saika” which of course, were his Palestinians.

KWS: How did Henry develop his relationship with Assad? I mean, the November 6th meeting with Sadat proved something to him, that he could trust this man.

RA: Yeah. Well, the first meeting with Assad I think he took a measure of Assad and I'm sure Assad took a measure of Henry. It certainly did not produce the kind of common relations of trust and confidence that he had with Sadat. But it did produce a respect for Assad as a shrewd, intelligent, in the final analysis, practical person, with whom he could work out some deals. Henry has a lot in his book about this negotiation, which I'm sure you've read.

KWS: Yeah but Henry's book is very a much a book of a man who wrote about himself. There's no source of information Roy, about evaluating Henry in relation to someone else. There's always an evaluation of Henry's view of the world.

RA: Yeah, and of the other people.

KWS: Right. And I'm trying to probe at these edges and it's very difficult to get at. It's most difficult. I mean, what we want to say about Peter, Peter's a wonderful man, but he's Henry's boy.

RA: Well, all of us, in a way, were Henry's boys under these circumstances. I mean Henry did, he carried these details of these negotiations around to a large extent, in his head. And many of us had to wait to hear what he was saying to Assad to know what our position was.

KWS: How did this make the ambassadors in the field feel? I mean, they must have been totally out of it.

RA: Well, they were sitting in on the meetings. I mean, when Henry met with Assad, we didn't have an ambassador there until after the disengagement agreements were signed. We had Scotese at that point. And my recollection was that he was in the meetings. I'll tell you who it was that he wanted to touch base with at some time, it was Issa Sabbagh. Issa Sabbagh was the interpreter for Henry in all of the meetings with Assad. Issa was a Palestinian American, you know, between...

KWS: Sure. Sure, sure, sure, sure.

RA: But, I'd put that in parenthetically, but he might have some recollections.

KWS: You were going to remember his name earlier.

RA: Yeah, that's why it just came to me. Issa Sabbagh.

KWS: Did Sadat, I'm trying to get the relationship of the return to a fuller supply of oil before the embargo was actually lifted and the connection between the Saudi relationship with us, United States, and the lifting of the oil embargo or increase of oil production, with the pace or the process of the negotiations. There seems to be two points of view. One that the Saudis turned to Henry and said "You've got to have a Syrian disengagement agreement. You've got to have something for the Syrians or we can't accommodate you." There's another point of view that says, which I've heard from people, that Henry said "I'm not going to be pushed by anybody and if I need a Syrian engagement, it's going to be because I need it for Assad. I'm not going to be told by you, the Saudis, what I'm going to do and when I'm going to do it. I'm going to do it at my own pace." Now Bill (Kirby) says there's really no inconsistency between this...

RA: That was going to be exactly my answer.

KWS: There's no inconsistency between that. But I get those two points of view...

RA: I think they're mutually compatible, in my view. Henry clearly did not want to give the Saudis the impression that they had a veto and he was sort of the puppet at the end of their string. On the other hand, he recognized that one test of the success of his negotiations was going to be getting the oil embargo lifted and production back to normal. So he had to talk about this one way to the Saudis and another way among ourselves. I don't, I would agree with Bill, I think that they're quite compatible. But the bottom line is that an objective of the disengagement negotiations, an American objective was not only to begin a peace process but it was to get the embargo lifted as part of this. The understanding being that once there was a genuine Israeli movement towards returning any territory, the Saudis would see this as enough to lift the embargo. And they began to ease it before the formal lifting. There were steps. One thing I remember quite explicitly, and I don't know whether this has ever come out frankly, Ken, in the public domain, but the Saudis did in very, very, at that time at least, very, very, sensitive and closely held undertaking for the Saudis that they would permit refueling of the, they would permit supplies to go for supplying the fleet, the 7th Fleet, even when the embargo was still in effect.

KWS: Did they provide that before the war?

RA: Well, it drew on Saudi, I don't know where they got, what the point of supply was but they would ensure that enough of the exports went to wherever the fleet had to go to get their supplies. That there would not be, that it would not immobilize the navy. That the navy would have access to what it needed. I guess it was the 7th Fleet because it had to be the Pacific...

KWS: And your job was still at this time in May-June '74, you were still at State as Deputy Assistant Secretary?

RA: No, Sisco became Undersecretary of Political Affairs in April of '74 and I became Assistant Secretary at the same time. I was moved up to replace Sisco.

KWS: And you stayed in that position...

RA: But everything I was doing was exactly the same. I mean, Sisco and I, I was travelling with the team, it was just that Sisco on the organizational chart, he was now closer to Kissinger. But he really wasn't any closer than he'd been. And I was now in a more senior, I was now the Assistant Secretary...

KWS: And you stayed in that position until when?

RA: Until April of '78.; until after Camp David. Then again, I was more devoting my time, that was one of the problems of being Assistant Secretary in NEA, was paying any attention to other than the Arab-Israeli side of the Bureau. I mean the South Asian side and what was happening in the Western Sahara. There were a lot of other problems and it was because of that that Vance finally said "I'm going to relieve you, I'm going to Ambassador at large Middle East negotiations, since that's all you're doing anyway."

KWS: That was after...

RA: That was April of '78. That wasn't after Camp David, I'm sorry, that was after Sadat's visit to Jerusalem and before Camp David.

KWS: Because you were the shuttle person. You kept on tapping people on the shoulder.

RA: And I was shuttling as Deputy Assistant Secretary, sorry as Assistant Secretary and totally unable to keep on top of everything else that NEA had responsibility for. I had Sid Silber as my deputy and he was handling a lot of these things. And by then, G-d, I'd have to go back and look at the records. But in any case, Vance quite rightly, said "You know, I'm going to relieve you of all your other responsibilities since this is all you're doing anyway." And had me made Ambassador at Large, but reporting to him, not to the President. I was in the Department and I was Ambassador at Large. My channel was the Secretary of State.

KWS: Let me ask you some specific questions about '77. We have about 10 minutes.

RA: We can have another session at another time if...

KWS: Okay, if you want that's fine. All right. Let me just ask one question though, which I need before I go to Israel. When I go to Israel, I'm going to see Meir Rosenne and I'm going to see Eliyahu Ben-Elissar and talk about the MENA House Talks. The MENA House talks came

about because Sadat and Begin couldn't really agree on anything in Jerusalem. And it was a way to keep a discussion going. I'm trying to figure out how we got involved.

RA: Which MENA House?

KWS: I'm talking about December 13th, 14th, 15th of '77. I'm talking within 3 or 4 weeks after Sadat's visit to Jerusalem. I'm talking about the Flora Lewis article here. I'm trying to figure out in my mind, you see, everyone writes that the State Department and the White House were completely flabbergasted by his trip, didn't know how to react, reacted very slowly. We were, who is this guy? What is he doing?

RA: That's true.

KWS: It's like he did a '73 war again only he did it on the diplomatic front.

RA: And again, we were playing catch-up ball.

KWS: Why? And then how did we get to MENA House?

RA: Sadat opposed MENA House (talks December 1973). Sadat said we have to, this was after he had made his trip to Jerusalem. And he announced, I mean I don't remember whether he told us in advance or whether he just announced that Egypt was going to invite all the parties to a Cairo preparatory conference for the Geneva Middle East Peace Conference, to get Geneva reconvened. And, after all, remember this had been the objective of the Carter Administration from the beginning. And we talked to Sadat about the need to get to Geneva. And he went to Jerusalem because the road to Geneva was full of frustrations for him. He ran out of patience and then saw more clearly than perhaps we did that it wasn't going to work. And he cut through all the red tape and all that. And the question was, "What's the follow-on act? I've been to Jerusalem; I made a speech; I laid out positions that are totally, their substance unacceptable to the Israelis. And the Israelis, there was no give. We can't just leave it there. I've got to have some follow-on. I can't have made this great gesture and have nothing come of it. And I will take the responsibility for convening a conference that will prepare the way for Geneva." And that was the name of the MENA House conference. It was called the Cairo Preparatory Conference for Geneva Middle East Peace Conference. And the Egyptians sent invitations to the PLO, the Russians, the Syrians, the Jordanians, the Israelis, the United Nations' Secretary General, and the United States. I've often wondered what would have happened if all of those had accepted. The other Arabs rejected it, including the PLO.

KWS: Epi Evron (Deputy Director General of the Israeli FM and later Israel's Ambassador to Washington) said to me, he said "If the PLO had showed up, we would have showed up."

RA: I don't see how they could not have shown up.

KWS: That's what he said! That's exactly what he said.

RA: I frankly don't see how they could not have. But they were taken off the hook in effect. So that it ended up, as you know, with just Israelis and Egyptians and the UN presence as an observer, made it very clear that Siilasvuo was there as an observer and not a party, and the US at the table as a friend to both sides.

KWS: Sounds exactly what Israeli General Yariv told Siilasvuo at Kilometer 101. "You're here as an observer. If I want to talk to Egyptian General Gamasy directly, he and I will do it directly. But we're not going to do it through you."

RA: Well, the choice here was Waldheim's to not, I mean, after all, this was something that was not like at the Geneva Conference where all the parties were there except the Syrians. And he after all, the Secretary General for the whole United Nations, he didn't want to get in the middle of a Soviet-US fight, which was what this would be. And so he made the decision that he would not respond by sending a participant but he would send an observer. It was more a distinction without a difference in a lot of ways.

KWS: Were there any Jordanians at the MENA House talks?

RA: No. No, no. They turned it down. The PLO turned it down. The Syrians and, the first day there were flags flying for all of the people who had been invited and the Israelis got up and complained about the Palestinian flag flying and the solution was to take them all down. No, the first day we drove out to MENA House and took one look, there were all those flags. I

thought "Uh oh. This is gonna do it!" And it did.

KWS: Let's leave it at that and we'll do another one, another session. Take a look at this list of Egyptians who were at Geneva and besides, well, who do you see there as, I mean this is curious, interesting in its own right, and the foreign minister. Is there anyone there whose mind you came to appreciate as someone who was cogent and intelligent and someone I should be speaking to?

RA: Yeah, he's dead. Tahsin Bashir. I don't remember Tahsin at that meeting. Was he there?

KWS: Umm hmm. He was the press spokesman.

RA: Okay. Omar Sirry. He's long retired. But if he's around. There's General Maghdub. No, Sirry was very able. Tahseen you know obviously very well. Umm, Mohammed Riad's dead. I don't remember seeing Heykal at all. Ahmed Osman, I think he would be very helpful. He was kind of a rather legalistic, he's what Don Burgess (former US State Dept official) used to call one of those Jesuits of the Foreign Ministry. Shafi Abdul-Hameed. I don't remember. Maghdub became the, he was the Egyptian head of the Egyptian-Israeli military working group. And was

there for the Syrian meetings. If you want to pick his brain about that limited aspect of it. Nabil Arabi, he'd be a good one. I don't remember, he would be a good one (to interview). Okay.

KWS: Okay. Wonderful.